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## OBSERVATIONS OF PERSEIDS IN 1915.

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BY CHARLES F. OLIVIER.

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The study of meteors having been strangely neglected by astronomers, particularly in America, some years ago the idea came to the author that interest in their study could be best promoted by the formation of an association consisting of both professionals and amateurs. Accordingly late in 1911, while at Agnes Scott College, Georgia, with the assistance of several astronomers, who kindly exerted their influence to make it a success, I was able to first organize the American Meteor Society and have observations made on a systematic plan.

During the first four years the membership never exceeded twenty-five persons, of whom only twelve actually sent in results. Of these the larger part were members of the Meteor Section of the Society for Practical Astronomy, and, it should be added, these members sent in most of the observations. The results for the first three years, 1911 to 1913 inclusive, were completely worked up by the author and published under the title "126 Orbits of Meteor Streams" as Part 4 of Volume 2, *Publications of the Leander McCormick Observatory, University of Virginia*.

Last spring, in recognition of the importance of the results obtained by the Society and to increase its usefulness, the National Academy of Sciences generously voted a sum from the J. Lawrence Smith Fund, which has permitted a great expansion in the work. At the same time a series of articles by Dr. S. A. MITCHELL and myself was published, asking for the assistance of all persons interested in meteors. The response was beyond expectation, over 100 new persons volunteering. As was to be expected, many of these, having once received the maps and instructions, apparently lost all interest. But on the other hand, the work, and in many cases work of a most excellent character, done by others, which has already been sent in, amounts to 1900 observations for July and August, 1915. This was done by twenty-one observers, situated in fourteen States and one in Canada. We have every

reason to believe that others have succeeded in getting at least something, but have not yet communicated their results.

The most ambitious plan consisted of simultaneous observations of the *Perseids*, made at four stations, on August 9-13 inclusive, from 12 hours E. S. T. to 14 hours E. S. T. These stations were: Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C., Prof. ALFRED DOOLITTLE observing; Hampden Sidney College, Va., Prof. J. BROOKES SMITH; Richmond, Va., Prof. T. McN. SIMPSON, and University of Virginia, C. P. OLIVIER. Bad weather prevented work on August 10th and 11th, but on the other three dates many apparent coincidences were observed. All four of the observers are now at work on the computations of the heights and paths of these meteors. It is hoped that some results of real value will be secured, though the work was merely preliminary to future efforts in the same direction.

It is announced with special pleasure that Mr. R. M. DOLE of the U. S. Weather Bureau intends to put the whole of his observations at the disposal of the Society for publication. While partly published in small sections already, the results have never been wholly reduced nor the orbits computed. As he has observed over 5000 meteors, this will make a great and valuable addition to the literature of Meteoric Astronomy.

The labor of preparing the many thousand observations already on hand and those expected in the near future is so great that definite results cannot be published for some little time. In the interval regular reports will appear in *Popular Astronomy* and elsewhere, in which the observer's name will appear, and the amount of work done by each will be duly accredited to him.

Even yet there must be many amateurs who would gladly help in our work if they realized that it was of actual scientific value. Our program for the observations of meteors offers the opportunity to all such persons.

We are now able to furnish maps, blanks and detailed instructions to all who apply. Observers and many observers are needed everywhere. If one cannot work except a few nights per year, we are still glad to have his assistance, and his work, if done in accordance with instructions, will be valuable. Training can only be acquired by experience, so

lack of it need deter no one. A cordial invitation is extended to anyone interested to write for further information to the address given below. As we are very short of observers in the West, we hope that many members of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific will communicate with us with a view to assisting.

LEANDER McCORMICK OBSERVATORY,  
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA,  
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA.